Ray Dupes A Nation

By D'ARMY BAILEY

IT IS time to put an end to the charade in which James Earl Ray leads the world in a losing search for claimed conspirators in the assassination of Martin Luther King. We should also end the baseless call of a new trial for this confessed killer of one of the world's greatest citizens.

For years now Ray has been talking of a frame-up, claiming he was not really the one who killed King. Ten years ago he pleaded guilty to shooting King and was sentenced to 99 years in the penitentiary.

Since Ray confessed to this heinous crime he has made a steady effort either to escape from prison or to convince the courts that his guilty plea should be set aside and he be given a new trial.

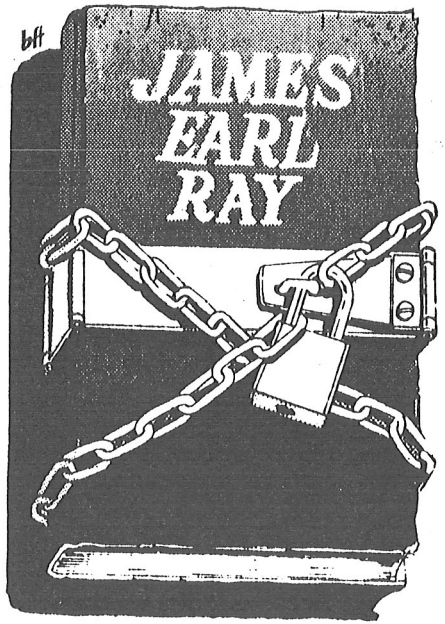
IN SPITE OF Ray's continuing claims of innocence, he has not in these last 10 years provided signficant proof that he was not guilty nor has he shown substantial evidence that anyone else was guilty.

Ray has had ample opportunity to talk. Yet the best that comes from him is a string of inconsistent fantasies that shed absolutey no new light on the subject of King's death.

Through television interviews and his appearance before U.S. District Judge Robert M. McRae Jr. here in 1974 when he argued for a new trial Ray has shown no foundation in his claims for a new trial. His claims of coercion to enter the guilty plea are familiar among some facing many years in prison.

And unlike many in prison Ray had the benefit of choosing from among the best lawyers in the criminal field.

IT IS DISTRESSING to see well-intentioned black leaders join the chorus of those pleading



Ray's case. He least of all among prisoners deserves the impassioned pleas that he have another hearing.

In the absence of strong evidence to the contrary Ray remains the man who took a hunting rifle and shot a bullet that flattened on impact and tore into Dr. King's face.

It is understandable that many Americans would think that others beside Ray were involved in the assassination. King had enough enemies, as a leader of millions and a man who often spoke what was unpopular to some.

But King is dead. Now we have to ask what good comes from continuing to dig and to discuss and to speculate about his death without new facts.

The long awaited congressional hearings into the King assassination last week demonstrated again that there are no credible new evidence or leads pointing to anyone but Ray in the King death. The hearings probably had to be held to at least show that an apparently good faith effort was being made to explore the black leader's death.

But Ray and his lawyer Mark Lane sought to use the hearings more as a stage in an effort to give obscure facts and create sympathy and give Ray legitimacy before the American people.

There is an underlying racial manipulation in Ray's activities. He appears to want to appeal to the Archie Bunker instinct, painting himself as an underdog hero caught in the web of circumstances

To some extent he has succeeded. It was chilling to see the local supporters Ray had when he broke out of Brushy Mountain Prison. It is doubtful his cheerers believed him innocent of his confessed crime.

RAY DESERVES WHAT he got. Now the world should rest easy that he is soundly locked up at the Brushy Mountain Prison. Let us stop being duped and giving attention to a notorious liar and confessed assassin.

Should there ever be any substantial evidence that there was a conspiracy, or that someone other than Ray was guilty, we should waste no time having a thorough inquiry. Until then our leadership should find a better cause than joining the parade behind James Earl Ray.